

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A prosthetic implant to at least partially support adjoining vertebrae in a spinal column, said prosthetic implant comprising a substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body and ~~at least one~~ single expandable component, said spherical or ellipsoidal body including a top portion and a bottom portion, said ~~at least one expanded~~ single expandable component at least partially positioned between said top and bottom portions, said top and bottom portions formed of a non-expandable material, said top and bottom portions designed to maintain a substantially same size and shape when said single expandable component is expanded, at least a portion of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component designed to expand radially outwardly from said spherical or ellipsoidal body to at least partially form a stabilizer, said ~~at least one expanded~~ single expandable component designed to increase in surface area and have ~~a greater~~ an increased sized perimeter when said ~~at least one expanded~~ single expandable component is expanded from an non-expanded state to an expanded state to at least partially form said stabilizer, said stabilizer in [[an]] said expanded state having a perimeter that is greater than a perimeter of said top and bottom portions of said spherical or ellipsoidal body, said stabilizer positioned about a central axis of said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body, said stabilizer being substantially disc shape.

2. (Previously Presented) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said top and bottom portions of said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body are substantially non-expandable, said top and bottom portions designed to maintain a substantially same size and shape when said expandable component is expanded, said spherical or ellipsoidal body at least partially formed of one or more materials selected from the group consisting of bone, metal, ceramic material,

polycarbonate, polypropylene, polyethylene, polymethylmethacrylate, polymer filled with glass, polymer filled with fibers, and combinations thereof.

Claims 3-4 (Canceled).

5. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component is at least partially positioned in, on or about an outer surface of said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body.

Claim 6 (Canceled).

7. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component is at least partially expandable radially outwardly about a central axis of said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body.

8. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component at least partially expands radially outwardly into a substantial disc shape.

9. (Withdrawn - Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component includes at least one biologically active substance, said at least one biologically active substance coated on said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component,

contained in said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component, or combinations thereof.

10. (Withdrawn - Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component includes at least one biologically active substance, at least one biologically neutral substance, or combinations thereof to at least partially inhibit tissue growth, bone growth, or combinations thereof on at least a portion of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component.

11. (Withdrawn - Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component includes at least one biologically active substance, at least one biologically neutral substance, or combinations thereof to at least partially promote tissue growth, bone growth, or combinations thereof on at least a portion of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component.

12. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component includes a substantially smooth surface.

13. (Withdrawn - Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component includes a non-smooth surface.

14. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said has a maximum radial expanded width that is up to 300% the maximum diameter of said substantially

spherical or ellipsoidal body.

15. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said expanded radial width of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component is substantially constant.

16. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said expanded radial width of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component is variable.

17. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component has a maximum expanded thickness that is less than a maximum diameter of said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body.

18. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 17, wherein said expanded thickness of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component is substantially constant.

19. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 17, wherein said expanded thickness of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component is variable.

20. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component is expandable radially outwardly from said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body along a substantially constant axis.

21. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component is expandable radially outwardly from said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body at an angle that deviates from a substantially constant axis.

22. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component has an expanded thickness adjacent to said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body that is different from an expanded thickness of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component at a location radially spaced from said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body.

23. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 22, wherein an outer perimeter of said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component includes at least one tapered edge in an expanded state.

24. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component and said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body are formed from at least one different material.

25. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes two hemispherical or two semi-hemispherical portions, said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component is portioned between said two hemispherical

or two semi-hemispherical portions.

26. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 25, wherein at least one of said two hemispherical or two semi-hemispherical portions of said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body are formed to maintain a tension load of at least about five pounds without substantially deforming.

27. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component includes an elastic material at least prior to the ~~at least one~~ single expandable component being expanded.

28. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 25, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component includes an elastic material at least prior to the ~~at least one~~ single expandable component being expanded.

29. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 27, wherein said elastic material includes an expandable pouch.

30. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 29, wherein said expandable pouch is at least partially hardenable.

31. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 29, wherein said expandable pouch includes at least one fluid or malleable material that is at least partially hardenable.

32. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 27, wherein said elastic material includes an expandable wall at least partially positioned between said two hemispherical or two semi-hemispherical portions of said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body.

33. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 32, wherein said expandable wall at least partially retains at least one fluid or malleable material that is at least partially hardenable.

34. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said expandable component includes at least one fluid or malleable material that is at least partially hardenable.

35. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes at least one cavity.

36. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 35, wherein less than a majority of the volume of said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes said at least one cavity.

37. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes an outer surface, at least a portion of said outer surface is substantially smooth.

38. (Withdrawn) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes an outer surface, at least a portion of said outer surface is substantially non-smooth.

39. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes an outer surface, said outer surface at least partially coated with a biologically active substance, a biologically neutral substance, or combinations thereof.

40. (Withdrawn) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes at least one opening.

41. (Withdrawn) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 37, wherein said at least one opening at least partially packed with a biologically active substance, a biologically neutral substance, or combinations thereof.

42. (Withdrawn) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 37, wherein said at least one opening including a connector that is adapted to receive an instrument to guide said prosthetic

implant between adjoining vertebrae in a spinal column, to receive a component of a stabilization system, or combinations thereof.

43. (Withdrawn) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 37, including a cap to at least partially cover or seal said at least one opening.

44. (Withdrawn) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes a mechanical compression arrangement that is adapted to at least partially compress together at least two portions of said spherical or ellipsoidal body.

45. (Withdrawn) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 40, wherein said mechanical compression arrangement includes a threaded member.

46. (Original) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes a memory material.

47. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component includes a memory material.

48. (Withdrawn) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes at least one electrical connection.

49. (Withdrawn - Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ single expandable component includes at least one electrical connection.

50. (Withdrawn) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body includes at least one pressure sensor.

51. (Withdrawn) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim 1, wherein said expandable component includes at least one pressure sensor.

Claims 52-77 (Canceled).

78. (Currently Amended) A method of expanding an expandable stabilizer of a prosthetic implant comprising:

a. selecting a prosthetic implant having a substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body and at least one expandable component, said spherical or ellipsoidal body including a top portion and a bottom portion, said ~~[[expanded]]~~ expandable component at least partially positioned between said top and bottom portions; and,

b. applying pressure to at least a portion of said at least one expandable component until said at least one expandable component at least partially radially expands, said at least one ~~[[expanded]]~~ expandable component designed ~~[[increasing]]~~ to increase in surface area and ~~having a greater~~ an increased sized perimeter when said at least one ~~[[expanded]]~~ expandable component

is expanded from an non-expanded state to an expanded state, said ~~[[expanded]]~~ expandable component in ~~[[an]]~~ said expanded state having a perimeter that is greater than a perimeter of said top and bottom portions of said spherical or ellipsoidal body.

Claim 79 (Canceled).

80. (Currently Amended) A method of expanding an expandable stabilizer of a prosthetic implant comprising:

a. selecting a prosthetic implant having a substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body and at least one expandable component, said spherical or ellipsoidal body including a top portion and a bottom portion, said ~~[[expanded]]~~ expandable component at least partially positioned between said top and bottom portions; and,

b. causing at least one material of said at least one expandable component to chemically react and form an expanded composition until said at least one expandable component at least partially expands, said at least one ~~[[expanded]]~~ expandable component ~~[[increasing]]~~ designed to increase in surface area and ~~having a greater~~ an increased sized perimeter when said at least one ~~[[expanded]]~~ expandable component is expanded from an non-expanded state to an expanded state, said ~~[[expanded]]~~ expandable component in ~~[[an]]~~ said expanded state having a perimeter that is greater than a perimeter of said top and bottom portions of said spherical or ellipsoidal body.

Claims 81-85 (Canceled).

86. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim ~~[[84]]~~ 1, wherein said single expandable component in an expanded state expanding from an outer surface of said spherical or ellipsoidal body a distance of 0.01%-300% a diameter of said spherical or ellipsoidal body.

Claims 87-88 (Canceled)

89. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim ~~[[84]]~~ 1, wherein said stabilizer having a thickness that is variable, said thickness of said stabilizer adjacent to said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body being different from said thickness of said stabilizer at a location radially spaced from said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body, said stabilizer having a peripheral edge that is tapered.

90. (Currently Amended) The prosthetic implant as defined in claim ~~[[88]]~~ 15, wherein said stabilizer having a thickness that is variable, said thickness of said stabilizer adjacent to said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body being different from said thickness of said stabilizer at a location radially spaced from said substantially spherical or ellipsoidal body, said stabilizer having a peripheral edge that is tapered.

Claims 91-95 (Canceled).

96. (Previously Presented) The method as defined in claim 78, wherein said top and bottom portions maintain a substantially same size and shape prior to and after said expandable component is expanded.

97. (Previously Presented) The method as defined in claim 80, wherein said top and bottom portions maintain a substantially same size and shape prior to and after said expandable component is expanded.